Desert Medical Research Centre's Report on Diabetes

*111. SHRI AIMADUDDIN AHMAD KHAN (DURRU): Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Desert medical Research Centre of ICMR has come to the conclusion that persons belonging to Reika Tribe, inhabitants of Jodhpur region of Rajasthan, never suffer from diabetes;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government propose to encourage diabetes prone people to adopt the life-style of Reika Tribesmen; and

(d) if so,the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): (a) to (d) A joint pilot study has been conducted by S.P. Medical College, Bikaner and the ICMR's Desert medicine Research Centre, Jodhpur to determine the prevalence of diabetes and IGT (impaired glucose tolerance) in Raica Community taking camel Milk, Raica Community not taking camel milk and Non-Raica Community not taking camel milk, living in the same geographical and socio-economic conditions. This was a community based cross-sectional study in villages including rural and semi-urban part of Jodhpur (North West Rajasthan). These subjects were grouped according to their habit of drinking camel milk.

The study revealed that the prevalence of diabetes was almost at 0% level in Raica Community taking camel milk and low (1.1%) in Raica Community not taking camel milk while 2.8% in Non Raica Community not taking camel milk, living in the same geographical and socio-economic condition. The study has concluded that camel milk consumption is important when post-prandial glucose measurements is taken into account but the significant difference between Raicas and Non-Raicas who did not consume camel milk is a pointer towards a possible genetic advantage lying with Raicas to handle glucose better. Further studies are, however, required to confirm that consumption of camel milk will actually reduce the incidence of diabetes mellitus.